

Nonlinear Monetary Policy Rules: Some New Evidence for the U.S.*

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Abstract

This paper derives optimal monetary policy rules in setups where certainty equivalence does not hold because either central bank preferences are not quadratic, and/or the aggregate supply relation is nonlinear. Analytical results show that these features lead to sign and size asymmetries, and nonlinearities in the policy rule. Reduced-form estimates indicate that US monetary policy can be characterized by a nonlinear policy rule after 1983, but not before 1979. This finding is consistent with the view that the Fed's inflation preferences during the Volcker-Greenspan regime differ considerably from the ones during the Burns-Miller regime.

*We thank Pedro Alvarez-Lois, the editor, an anonymous referee, and seminar participants at CEMFI and LACEA 2002 (Madrid) for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. The first author acknowledges the hospitality of the University of Montreal. The third author thanks the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada) and the Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche (Quebec) for financial support. Correspondence to: Francisco J. Ruge-Murcia, Département de sciences économiques, Université de Montreal, C.P. 6128, succursale Centre-ville, Montreal (Quebec) H3C 3J7; Canada, e-mail: francisco.ruge-murcia@umontreal.ca

1 Introduction

This paper derives and estimates optimal monetary policy rules in a setup where certainty equivalence does not hold. In particular, our approach combines two different strands of the literature on monetary policy rules that depart from the standard linear-quadratic framework because either 1) central bank preferences are not quadratic, or 2) the aggregate supply relation is nonlinear.

As it is well known (see, for example, Svensson, 1997, and Clarida *et al.*, 1999), the combination of a quadratic loss function and a linear aggregate supply constraint leads to a linear reaction function, or Taylor rule, by the central bank. The optimal policy rule implies that the nominal short-term interest rate under the central bank's control is a linear function of the inflation and output gap deviations from their respective targets. Depending on the backward or forward nature of wage and price setting, and on assumptions regarding the information available to the central bank, both variables appear in the rule either in current terms or as expectations of their future values. Because they provide a reasonably good description of policy, linear rules have become a key element of diagnosis in the toolkit of monetary-policy analysts.

Recently, however, there have been a number of studies that seek to extend this traditional setup. The generalizations fall in two groups. *First*, Nobay and Peel (1998), Cukierman (2000), Gerlach (2000), and Ruge-Murcia (2002, 2004) relax the assumption of a quadratic central bank loss function and adopt instead asymmetric preference specifications. Their functional forms allow different weights for positive and negative inflation and/or output deviations from their target. Asymmetric preferences modify some of the results previously derived in the linear-quadratic framework. For example, Cukierman (2000) shows that when the central bank is more concerned about under- than over-employment and there is uncertainty regarding future realizations of inflation and unemployment, an inflation bias can arise even if the unemployment target is the natural rate. Cukierman's proposition is examined empirically by Ruge-Murcia (2002, 2004) using cross-section data from OECD countries and time series data from G-7 countries, respectively.

Second, Schaling (1999) and Dolado *et al.* (2003) study models where the aggregate supply curve is not linear, but convex. In particular, the difference between realized and expected inflation is a convex function of the output gap. The underlying idea behind this specification goes back to the traditional Keynesian assumption that nominal wages are flexible upwards but rigid downwards, implying that inflation is a decreasing and convex function of the unemployment rate. This implies that an increase in unemployment will drive inflation down by much less when unemployment is high than when it is

low (see, for example, Layard *et al.*, 1991, and Álvarez-Lois, 2001). If unemployment and the output gap are related through Okun's law, then a convex relationship between inflation and the output gap is a natural generalization of the linear aggregate supply. Combined with a quadratic loss function, the optimally-derived Taylor rule has nonlinear features: it implies that the central bank will increase interest rates by a larger amount when inflation is above target than it will reduce them when inflation is below target.

The goal of this paper is to construct and estimate a general model that combines both asymmetric central bank preferences and a nonlinear Phillips curve. This is important for several reasons. *First*, it allows the joint analysis of two departures from the linear-quadratic setup that until now have been studied separately in the literature. *Second*, it permits us to trace back nonlinearities and asymmetries in the nominal interest rate to either central bank preferences, nonlinearities in the supply curve, or both. *Finally*, parameter estimates will indicate the relative importance of these two elements in monetary policy making.

The contributions of this paper are twofold. First, from an analytical viewpoint, we construct a model of inflation targeting where the central bank's preferences are asymmetric and the aggregate supply curve is nonlinear. Preferences are asymmetric in the sense that positive deviations from the inflation target can be weighted more (or less) severely than negative deviations in the central bank's loss function. The aggregate supply curve is an increasing and convex function of the output gap. In this manner, we are able to derive a Taylor rule in a nonlinear framework that generalizes the usual specification in the literature where the objective function is quadratic and constraints are linear.

Second, from an empirical viewpoint, we confront the new Taylor rule with data on short-term interest rate interventions by the U.S. Federal Reserve. Reduced-form estimates indicate that U.S. monetary policy can be characterized by a nonlinear rule after 1983, but not before 1979. Although we do not find evidence in favor of a convex aggregate supply curve, we do find evidence consistent with asymmetric inflation preferences on the part of the U.S. Federal Reserve after 1983. This suggests that the Fed's inflation preferences during the Volcker-Greenspan regime differ considerably from the ones during the Burns-Miller regime. When we compare our results with those of Clarida *et al.* (2000), we do not find evidence that the (linear) response of the short-term interest rate to inflation was larger than unity once asymmetric preferences are allowed for. The reason for this result is that under asymmetric preferences, the targeted interest rate depends on the conditional variance of inflation, that in turn depends nonlinearly on lagged inflation. The response of the interest rate to inflation depends on a linear part and a nonlinear part such that the

overall response is stabilizing, as suggested by Clarida *et al.* However, the interpretation of how stabilization was achieved in the Volcker-Greenspan era is different in both models.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 derives the form of the nonlinear policy rule under the general case of asymmetric preferences and a convex aggregate supply curve, and compares it to several subcases. Section 3 estimates the nonlinear rule for the U.S., distinguishing between the two relevant subperiods and using a wide array of alternative specification to check the robustness of the results. Finally, Section 4 concludes. Two Appendices contain detailed derivations of the nonlinear monetary policy rule in different setups.

2 A Simple Model

In order to fix ideas, it is helpful to consider a simple model of optimal monetary policy. The model follows closely the one proposed by Svensson (1997), but generalizes the specification of the central bank preferences and aggregate supply curve in a manner to be made precise below. Although Section 3 reports estimates of the policy rule obtained using this model, it also shows that the main finding of this paper is robust to the precise form of the rule (for example, whether forward or backward looking).

Assume that monetary policy is conducted by a central bank that chooses the sequence of short-term interest rates that minimizes the present discounted value of its loss function. The loss function depends on the distance between realized inflation and its socially optimal rate. Formally, the central bank's problem is¹

$$\text{Min}_{\{i_{t+s}\}_{s=0}^{\infty}} E_t \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \beta^s L(\pi_{t+s} - \pi^*), \quad (1)$$

where i_t is the nominal interest rate, $0 < \beta < 1$ is the discount rate, π_t is the inflation rate, π^* is socially-optimal inflation rate, and the loss function $L(\cdot)$ takes the form:

$$L(\pi_t - \pi^*) = \frac{\exp(\gamma(\pi_t - \pi^*)) - \gamma(\pi_t - \pi^*) - 1}{\gamma^2}.$$

¹Subsection 2.3 and Appendix B discuss the more difficult case where the output gap is also a component of the loss function. Although an exact closed-form solution cannot be obtained in this case, it is possible to derive an approximate solution. We show that, as in linear case examined by Svensson (1997, 2003), allowing an output stabilization term does not change the arguments of the policy function, but it changes the interest-rate response by the central bank to inflation and the output gap.

This loss function corresponds to the linex function, originally proposed by Varian (1974). This function has several important properties. *First*, it permits different weights for positive and negative inflation deviations from π^* . *Second*, it predicts that both the size and sign of a deviation affect the central bank's loss. In contrast, under quadratic preferences, the loss is completely determined by the size of the deviation. *Third*, it allows a prudence motive on the part of the central bank so that moments of higher order than the mean might play a role in the formulation of monetary policy. *Finally*, it nests the quadratic function commonly used in previous literature as a special case when the preference parameter γ tends to zero. This result suggests that the hypothesis that the central bank's preferences are quadratic over inflation could be evaluated by testing whether γ is statistically different from zero.

The central bank takes as given the behavior of the private sector, that is summarized by:

$$y_{t+1} = \delta y_t - r_t + x_{t+1}, \quad (2)$$

$$\pi_{t+1} = \pi_t + F(y_t) + u_{t+1}, \quad (3)$$

where

$$F(y_t) = \alpha y_t / (1 - \alpha \phi y_t), \quad (4)$$

$$x_{t+1} = \eta x_t + \epsilon_{t+1}, \quad (5)$$

$$i_t = r_t + E_t \pi_{t+1}, \quad (6)$$

y_t is the output gap, r_t is the real interest rate, x_t is an exogenous variable that follows the AR(1) process in (5) with $0 \leq \eta < 1$, u_t and ϵ_t are normally and independently distributed shocks with zero mean and variances σ_u^2 and σ_ϵ^2 , respectively, and the remaining parameters satisfy $0 < \delta < 1$, $\alpha > 0$, and $\phi \geq 0$. Note that although we assume constant unconditional variances for u_t and ϵ_t , we allow the possibility that these shocks are conditionally heteroskedastic. Equation (2) is an IS relationship where the output gap depends on the lagged output gap, the real interest rate, and the exogenous variable, x_t . Equation (3) is a backward-looking AS relationship where inflation depends on lagged inflation and output gap, the latter appearing in a (possibly) nonlinear way. The nonlinearity of the AS curve is represented using the functional form (4). This form has been used previously by Schaling (1999) and Dolado *et al.* (2003) and includes the cases of a linear AS curve when $\phi = 0$ and a convex one when $\phi > 0$. It implicitly assumes that the inflation rate next period increases without bound as the output gap approaches the vertical asymptote $1/\alpha\phi$. Notice that, in the absence of uncertainty regarding the IS schedule (that is, $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$), y_{t+1} is predetermined at time t and, consequently, forms part of the agents' information set at time t . This assumption is fairly restrictive

but adopted in what follows for analytical convenience. Subsection 2.3 below discusses in the implications of relaxing this assumption. Finally, Equation (6) is the Fisher relation. Although this model is a highly stylized description of the economy, it is representative of the type of models used by the literature on monetary policy rules (see Svensson, 2003).

Since the interest rate affects inflation with a two-period lag, without any effects in t and $t + 1$, the central bank can find the optimal interest rate at time t as the solution to the simpler period-by-period problem:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Min} \quad & E_t \beta^2 L(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*). \\ & \{i_t\} \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

The Appendix A shows that the first-order conditions for minimizing (7) subject to the constraints (2) and (3), yields the following Taylor rule for the nominal interest rate:

$$i_t = \pi_t + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \frac{(1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t))}{1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t))} + \eta x_t, \quad (8)$$

where $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ denotes the conditional variance of the inflation rate. The subscript t indicates that this conditional variance might change over time.

The Taylor rule (8) is general in that it nests the cases where the central bank's preferences are quadratic ($\gamma \rightarrow 0$), the AS schedule is linear ($\phi = 0$), or both. The latter case corresponds to the linear monetary policy rules examined by previous literature. In order to gain intuition regarding this policy rule, the following sections examine three special cases contained in (8) and explore the consequences of relaxing some of the assumptions under which it was derived.

2.1 Case I: Linear Aggregate Supply Schedule ($\phi = 0$)

When $\phi = 0$, the function $F(\cdot)$ becomes $F(y_t) = \alpha y_t$ and the AS curve is linear. In this case the only nonstandard feature of the model is the asymmetry in central bank preferences, and the nonlinear Taylor rule simplifies to

$$i_t = \pi_t + (1 + \alpha + \delta)y_t + (1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2) + \eta x_t. \quad (9)$$

Under asymmetric preferences, the conditional variance of inflation, $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ (along with the inflation rate and the output gap) is one of the determinants of the interest rate. If $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ depends on lagged inflation and output (for example, as in ARCH-type models), the Taylor rule will be nonlinear in lagged inflation and output.

Consider the situation where $\gamma > 0$, meaning that the central bank weights more severely positive than negative inflation deviations from its optimal rate. Since $\alpha > 0$, an increase in inflation volatility (as measured by $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$), leads to an increase in the nominal interest rate, even if the level of inflation and the output gap remain unchanged. The increase is directly proportional to γ because the central bank's prudence increases with γ . The increase is inversely proportional to α for the following reason: when α is large, the central bank needs to increase the nominal and real interest rates by less because a given decrease in the output gap leads to a proportionally larger decrease in inflation when the AS curve is steep.

2.2 Case II: Quadratic Loss Function ($\gamma \rightarrow 0$)

When $\gamma \rightarrow 0$, the central bank preferences become quadratic in inflation and there is no longer a prudence motive in the implementation of monetary policy. However, if $\phi > 0$, the AS curve is convex and the Taylor rule takes the nonlinear form

$$i_t = \pi_t + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \frac{(1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t))}{1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t))} + \eta x_t. \quad (10)$$

In this case y_t , will not appear in a linear way but through the $F(\cdot)$ transformation. As a result of the second-to-last term in (10), the nominal interest rate will depend nonlinearly on inflation and the output gap, but this nonlinearity is conceptually and functionally different from the one in Case I above. It is shown below that when the AS curve is convex, interest rate changes in response to inflation/output deviations from their target are subject to sign and size asymmetries.

2.3 Case III: Linear Rule

The case where both $\gamma \rightarrow 0$ and $\phi = 0$ corresponds to the usual model with quadratic preferences and linear constraints. In this case, the optimal reaction function is linear in inflation and output:

$$i_t = \pi_t + (1 + \alpha + \delta)y_t + (1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^*) + \eta x_t. \quad (11)$$

We will see below, in this case changes in the short-term nominal interest rate are symmetric, proportional, and history-independent. Put differently, for linear models, the impulse-response associated with a shock of size 1 (standard deviation) would be the mirror image of the response to a shock of size -1 , one-half the response of shock size 2, and independent of the moment the shock is assumed to take place (see Koop *et al.*, 1996).

2.4 Implications

As we have seen above, the combination of asymmetric central bank preferences and a nonlinear AS curve has nontrivial implications for the interest-rate response to inflation and output gap deviations from their desired values. This section explores in more detail some of these implications and the interaction between the two main features of the model.

When the AS curve is linear, a marginal change in the current inflation rate leads the central bank to change the nominal interest rate by $\partial i_t / \partial \pi_t = 1 + 1/\alpha$. In this case, the change in i_t is independent of the current output gap and inflation rate and is symmetric, meaning that if inflation increases (decreases) by 1 per cent, the nominal interest rate increases (decreases) by $1 + 1/\alpha$ per cent.

In contrast, under the general Taylor rule (8) (where the AS curve is nonlinear), the change in i_t is $\partial i_t / \partial \pi_t = 1 + (1/\alpha)(1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t)))^{-2}$. The nonlinear interest rate rule gives rise to sign and size asymmetries. The *sign* asymmetry refers to the fact that under the nonlinear Taylor rule, the response to an increase in inflation is larger than the response to a decrease, even if both are of the same magnitude. As an illustration, assume that inflation is exactly the optimal rate, the output gap is zero, and $\alpha = 2$, $\delta = 0.1$, $\phi = 0.2$ and $\gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 = 0.4$. Then, $\Delta\pi_t = +1$ induces $\Delta i_t = +1.76$ but $\Delta\pi_t = -1$ induces $\Delta i_t = -1.48$.

The *size* asymmetry refers to the fact that the interest rate response does not change linearly with the change in the inflation rate. For example, taking the same parameter values above, $\Delta\pi_t = +1$ induces $\Delta i_t = +1.76$ but $\Delta\pi_t = +2$ induces $\Delta i_t = +4.09$. Although $\Delta\pi_t = +2$ is twice $\Delta\pi_t = +1$, the interest rate response $+4.09$ is more than twice $+1.76$. On the other hand, while $\Delta\pi_t = -1$ induces $\Delta i_t = -1.48$, $\Delta\pi_t = -2$ induces $\Delta i_t = -2.82$, that is less than twice -1.48 . The sign and size asymmetries that arise when the AS curve is convex follow directly from the fact that the interest rate response with respect to inflation ($\partial i_t / \partial \pi_t$) is convex on the rate of inflation.

Note that when $\gamma = 0$ and, consequently, $\gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 = 0$, the corresponding interest rate responses to $\Delta\pi_t = +1$ and -1 under the nonlinear Taylor rule would be $\Delta i_t = +1.63$ and -1.42 , respectively, whereas for $\Delta\pi_t = \pm 2$ they would be $\Delta i_t = +3.67$ and -2.71 . Hence, asymmetric preferences appear to reduce the size of both the sign and size asymmetries. The reason is that the interest rate response to inflation is less convex on inflation as $\gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2$ decreases.

Similar results regarding sign and size asymmetries arise when considering the interest rate response to a change in the output gap. When the AS curve is linear, $\partial i_t / \partial y_t = 1 + \alpha + \delta$, but under the nonlinear Taylor rule,

$\partial i_t / \partial y_t = \delta + F'(y_t)(1 + (1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t))^{-2})$ where $F'(y_t) = \partial F(y_t) / \partial y_t = \alpha(1 - \alpha\phi y_t)^{-2}$. The interest rate depends nonlinearly on the current output gap giving rise to asymmetric responses on the part of the central bank. For the parameter values above, the interest rate response to $\Delta y_t = \pm 0.1$ is $\Delta i_t = 0.35$ and -0.31 . The response to $\Delta y_t = \pm 0.2$ is 0.74 and -0.59 . Hence, as before, the response depends on the sign of the output gap deviation from its target and is nonlinearly related to the size of the deviation. This implication is in line with research by Bec *et al.* (2002), who find that the state of the business cycle (measured by the output gap) is important for U.S. monetary policy.

In summary, a convex AS curve leads an optimizing central bank to respond asymmetrically, in both sign and size, to changes in the output gap and inflation rate. Asymmetric preferences leads to prudent behavior whereby the central bank responds to the conditional variance of inflation. When both features are present, asymmetric preferences appear to reduce the sign and size asymmetries that arise due to the nonlinearity of the supply curve. Since asymmetric preferences and a nonlinear AS schedule lead to different types of nonlinearity in the interest rate response by the central bank, it might be possible to assess empirically relative importance of these two elements in monetary policy making.

2.5 Allowing Uncertainty About the Output Gap

We now examine the effects of output-gap uncertainty on the determination of the short-term interest rate. That is, we relax the assumption that $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$ in the model above. Schaling (1999) points out that by allowing the random term ϵ_{t+1} in Equation (5), uncertainty about the true value of next period's output gap implies that the slope of the Phillips curve becomes random and gives rise to model uncertainty.

Using the properties of the log-normal distribution, the expected discounted loss function in period $t + 2$ can be expressed as:

$$\beta^2 \left(\frac{\exp(\gamma E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - \gamma E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) - 1}{\gamma^2} \right). \quad (12)$$

Define $\bar{\pi}_{t+2} = \pi_t + F(y_t) + F(E_t y_{t+1})$ and write $E_t \pi_{t+2} = \bar{\pi}_{t+2} + E_t z_{t+2}$, where $E_t z_{t+2} = E_t F(y_{t+1}) - F(E_t y_{t+1})$ is a term that represents the effect of Jensen's inequality. Using this decomposition, the right-hand side of Equation (12) may be rewritten as

$$\beta^2 \left(\frac{\exp(\gamma(\bar{\pi}_{t+2} + E_t z_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - \gamma(\bar{\pi}_{t+2} + E_t z_{t+2} - \pi^*) - 1}{\gamma^2} \right). \quad (13)$$

The minimization of (13) with respect to i_t subject to the constraints (2) to (6) has first-order condition²

$$(\exp(\gamma(\bar{\pi}_{t+2} + E_t z_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - 1)(\partial\bar{\pi}_{t+2}/\partial i_t + \partial E_t z_{t+2}/\partial i_t) = 0. \quad (14)$$

Then, following the steps in Appendix A, the Taylor rule for the nominal interest rate is

$$i_t = \pi_t + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \frac{(1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t) + E_t z_{t+2})}{1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/2 + F(y_t) + E_t z_{t+2})} + \eta x_t. \quad (15)$$

Notice that the Taylor rule (15) is very similar to (8), except for the term $E_t z_{t+2}$ in both the numerator and denominator of former equation. In the case where σ_ϵ^2 is small, $E_t z_{t+2}$ is also small and the Taylor rule (8) approximates well (15). However, in general, because $F(y_t)$ is convex then $E_t z_{t+2} = E_t F(y_{t+1}) - F(E_t y_{t+1}) > 0$. This means that since i_t is increasing in the term in brackets above, the short-term interest rate set according to rule (15) is higher than under the nonlinear rule (8). That is, uncertainty regarding the output gap induces an upward bias in the nominal interest rate, in addition to the effect of the nonlinearity *per se* that was analyzed before.

Finally, notice that in the case where the Phillips curve is linear ($\phi = 0$), then $E_t z_{t+2} = 0$, and the optimal monetary policy rule is (9), regardless of whether one allows output-gap uncertainty. We will see below that this is the empirically relevant case for the U.S. and, consequently, our conclusions are robust to this generalization of the model.

2.6 Introducing the Output Gap in the Loss Function

In the previous discussion, the central bank's loss function depends on inflation alone. However, when dealing with the U.S. economy, this specification is fairly restrictive because the Fed's objectives explicitly include both output and inflation. In this section, we study the more general specification where the output gap is also an argument of the central bank's objective function, and show that the form of the Taylor rule in (8) remains qualitatively unchanged by this extension.

First, note that if there is uncertainty, then the natural output rate under a convex Phillips curve is always below that predicted by the linear model (see, for example, Clark *et al.*, 1995, and Schaling, 1999). To see this formally, it suffices to note that in an equilibrium with a constant inflation-rate

²Note that since the conditional variance of inflation depends primarily on the properties of the exogenous disturbance(s), then $\partial\sigma_{\pi,t}^2/\partial i_t \approx 0$.

target, $E_t \Delta \pi_{t+2} = E_t F(y_{t+1}) = 0$. Then, since $E_t F(y_{t+1}) \simeq F(E_t y_{t+1}) + (1/2)F''(E_t y_{t+1})\sigma_\epsilon^2$, this equation (implicitly) defines $E_t y_{t+1}$ to be below zero when $F(\cdot)$ is convex. This means that, rather than trying to minimize deviations of y_{t+1} from zero, the central bank would try to minimize deviations of $F(y_{t+1})$ from zero. We explore here the more tractable case where the loss associated with the deviation of $F(y_{t+1})$ from zero is well approximated by the usual quadratic form and retain the initial assumption that $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$. The central bank's period-by-period objective is the minimization of

$$L(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\lambda/2)(F(y_{t+1}))^2, \quad (16)$$

where $\lambda \geq 0$ is the weight of output stabilization in the central bank's objective function. Appendix B shows that the optimal interest rate that minimizes (16) subject to constraints (2) to (6) has general form

$$\begin{aligned} i_t = & \pi_t + ((1 - \theta)/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t)) + (\omega/\alpha)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 \\ & + (\omega\beta\theta/\alpha) \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2 + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \eta x_t, \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

where $0 < \theta < 1$ and $\omega > 0$ if and only if $\gamma > 0$. Since, $\alpha > 0$ and $0 < \beta < 1$, then an increase in the conditional variance of inflation induces a prudent motive on the part of the central bank and the nominal interest rate is higher than in the certainty-equivalent case.

In the case where the conditional variance of inflation follows a GARCH(1,1) process with $\varsigma \in (0, 1)$ the coefficient of the lagged squared residual and $\kappa \in (0, 1)$ the coefficient of the lagged conditional variance, then (17) reduces to

$$\begin{aligned} i_t = & \pi_t + ((1 - \theta)/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t)) + F(y_t) + \delta y_t \\ & + (\omega/\alpha)(1 + \beta\theta\varsigma/(1 - \beta\theta\varsigma))\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 + \eta x_t - (\kappa/(1 - \beta\theta\varsigma))\zeta_t, \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

where ζ_t is an innovation. This Taylor rule has the same arguments of (8) and a positive relation between $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ and i_t indicates that $\gamma > 0$, meaning that the central bank attaches a larger loss to positive than negative inflation deviations from the target. The functional form of this rule is different from (8) because of the linearizations required to obtain a closed-form solution (see Appendix B). However, the reduced-form that we estimate below for the U.S. could also be motivated by the approximate rule (18). It is easy to verify that, as in Svensson (1997, 2003), allowing for an output stabilization term in the loss function reduces the central bank's interest-rate response to inflation and the output gap. Further, if $\sigma_\epsilon^2 > 0$ and the one-step-ahead IS curve is not perfectly forecastable, then using similar arguments to the ones above it is possible to show that uncertainty would imply a stronger interest-rate response than the certainty-equivalent case.

3 Empirical Evidence

3.1 Data

The nonlinear Taylor rule is estimated using U.S. data on inflation, the output gap, and the Federal Funds rate. Previous literature employs both monthly and quarterly data frequencies to estimate monetary policy rules. We report results using both data frequencies and show that the main result of the paper is robust to whether one uses monthly or quarterly data in estimation. At the monthly frequency, inflation is measured by the annual percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Output is measured by the seasonally-adjusted Industrial Production Index (IPI). The natural output level is the Hodrick-Prescott (HP) trend of the logged IPI. The output gap is then computed as the difference between the logged IPI and its HP trend. We also consider a second measure of the output gap constructed as minus the difference between the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate and its HP trend. The sample period is 1970:01 to 2000:12, but we focus on the subsamples 1970:01 to 1979:06 and 1983:01 to 2000:12. The first subsample corresponds (roughly) to the chairmanships of Arthur Burns and William Miller. The second subsample corresponds to the chairmanships of Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, but excludes the period when the Federal Reserve targeted non-borrowed reserves, rather than short-term interest rates.

At the quarterly frequency, inflation is measured by the annualized quarterly percentage change in the Implicit GDP Deflator. Two measures of the output gap are constructed as explained above, except that the quarterly observations of the IPI and unemployment rate are the arithmetic average of the three observations in each month of the quarter. Similarly, the Federal Funds rate at the quarterly frequency is the arithmetic average of the three observations in each quarter. Since at the quarterly frequency the number of observations in the first subsample 1970:I to 1979:II is too small to yield reliable results, we follow Clarida *et al.* (2000) in starting the quarterly sample in 1960:I.

The data source for the Consumer Price Index, Implicit GDP Deflator, and unemployment rate is the web site of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov>), and for the Federal Funds rate and the Industrial Production Index is web site of the Federal Board of Governors.

3.2 Preliminary Analysis

The estimation of the nonlinear Taylor-rule is carried out using a two-step procedure. First, the conditional variance of inflation is estimated from the

aggregate supply relation. Then, $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ is replaced in the Taylor rule and the rule is estimated by the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM). However, some issues need to be addressed prior to estimation. First, the precise form of the nonlinear Taylor rule depends on whether the aggregate supply relation is linear or not. Recall that the AS curve is linear when $\phi = 0$ and convex when $\phi > 0$. Hence, it is important to test whether ϕ is statistically different from zero in our data set. Second, the prediction that the conditional variance of inflation is a component of the policy rule can be examined in a time series setup only if inflation is conditionally heteroskedastic. Otherwise, if $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ is constant, its coefficient might not be identified. Hence, one must also test whether the conditional variance of inflation is indeed time-varying.

In order to address these two issues, we estimate the aggregate supply relation (3) by nonlinear least squares treating the disturbance term u_t as conditionally homoskedastic. We then test the null hypothesis $\phi = 0$ using a t -test, and the null hypothesis of no conditional heteroskedasticity using a LM test for neglected ARCH. The LM statistics were calculated as the product of the number of observations and the uncentered R^2 of the OLS regression of the squared unemployment residual on a constant and six of its lags. Under the null hypothesis of no conditional heteroskedasticity, the statistic is distributed chi-square with as many degrees of freedom as the number of lagged squared residuals included in the regression.

Results in Panels A and B of Table 1, support the notion of an upward sloping AS curve (as predicted by the theory), but results using quarterly data are somewhat weaker than the ones using monthly data. This result might be explained by the fact that the econometrician has more data points to estimate α when using monthly than quarterly data. In all cases the hypothesis $\phi = 0$ cannot be rejected at standard levels. Hence, for these sample periods and data frequencies, it would appear that the U.S. aggregate supply curve is well approximated by a linear relation.³ Results of the LM tests for neglected ARCH are reported in the first row of Table 2. Note that the hypothesis of no conditional heteroskedasticity is rejected for both frequencies and output gap measures.

In light of these results, we estimate a linear (in mean) AS curve with conditionally heteroskedastic errors. The parameter ϕ is constrained to be zero and the conditional variance of inflation is parameterized using a GARCH(1,1) model. These results are reported in Panel C of Table 1. The terms ψ , ζ , and κ denote the constant, the coefficient of the lagged square residual, and the coefficient of the lagged conditional variance, respectively. Note that in all cases their estimates are significant and suggest a persistent process for $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$.

³Similar results are reported by Gordon (1997) and Dolado *et al.* (2003). Blinder (1999, p.19) points out that for the U.S. a “linear Phillips curve fits the data extremely well.”

Since the conditional variance is estimated using inflation and output data, $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ is a generated regressor for the second step of the estimation procedure. The implications of generated regressors in estimation and inference have been examined by Pagan (1984) and Pagan and Ullah (1988). Generated regressors can be problematic because they measure with noise the true, but unobserved, regressor. In the case of models where a conditional variance is one of the explanatory variables, estimates can be biased and inconsistent if the ARCH-type model employed is misspecified. Pagan and Ullah suggest specification tests to assess whether the chosen ARCH model is valid. A standard misspecification test for ARCH models is the same LM test for neglected ARCH described above, but applied to the standardized residuals. If the ARCH model is correctly specified, then the residuals corrected for heteroskedasticity and squared should be serially uncorrelated. The second row in Table 2 reports these LM statistics. Since all statistics are below the 5 per cent critical value of the appropriate distribution, the null hypothesis of no autocorrelation cannot be rejected. Hence, it would appear that the parsimonious GARCH(1,1) model employed here adequately captures the conditional heteroskedasticity present in the U.S. inflation data.

Based on these empirical results and on the analytical results in Sections 2.5 and 2.6, the econometric analysis that follows focuses on the reduced-form of the Taylor rule (9).

3.3 Estimation

Following Clarida *et al.* (2000), the observed smoothing of interest rates is represented by a partial adjustment model whereby lagged values of the interest rate are also included as explanatory variables. The optimally determined interest rate is interpreted as the desired rate towards which the current interest rate sluggishly adjusts. That is,

$$i_t = \rho(L)i_{t-1} + (1 - \rho)i_t^* + \xi_t, \quad (19)$$

where $\rho(L) = \rho_1 + \rho_2 L + \dots + \rho_{n+1} L^n$, $\rho \equiv \rho(1)$, and i_t^* is given by the right hand side of Equation (9). Substituting (9) into (19), the estimated model is

$$i_t = a + \rho(L)i_{t-1} + (1 - \rho)(by_t + c\pi_t + d\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 + \eta x_t) + \xi_t, \quad (20)$$

where a is an intercept term, $b = 1 + \alpha + \delta$, $c = 1 + 1/\alpha$, and $d = \gamma/2\alpha$.

As an additional check on the robustness of the results, we also estimate two forward-looking versions of (20) where the current values of $\pi_t(y_t)$ are replaced by expectations of future variables $k(q)$ periods ahead, $E_t \pi_{t+k}$ and $E_t y_{t+q}$, and a backward-looking version where they are replaced by $\pi_{t-1}(y_{t-1})$. The partial

adjustment models were estimated by the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM), using lagged values of the variables as instruments.⁴ Denoting by Ω_t a vector of m instruments, GMM exploits the set of orthogonality conditions $E(\xi_t|\Omega_t) = 0$ to estimate the relevant parameters. The validity of the $(m - p)$ overidentification restrictions can be assessed through the J test that is asymptotically distributed as a chi-square with $(m - p)$ degrees of freedom.

The estimated nonlinear rules are reported in Tables 3 and 4, for the periods 1970:01 to 1979:06 and 1983:01 to 2000:12, respectively. The number of interest rate lags in $\rho(L)$ was chosen using the Bayesian information criteria, but sensitive analysis indicates that results are robust to the exact number lags included in the regression. Their estimates are not reported to save space, but are available from the corresponding author upon request. The basic difference between both set of results is that the coefficient on the conditional variance of inflation (d) is not statistically significant in the first subsample, but it is always positive and significant in the second one. This result is robust to both forward and backward-looking specifications of the Taylor rule (see columns (3) to (5)). Notice that in most cases for the second subsample, the rate of inflation is no longer statistically significant once one introduces the conditional variance as a regressor. In all cases, the overidentification restrictions of the model are not rejected by the data at standard significant levels.

These findings suggest the following. *First*, monetary policy in the United States could be well approximated by a linear Taylor rule prior to 1979. *Second*, the Fed's inflation preferences could be described as symmetric with respect to inflation in the period prior 1979. More precisely, the hypothesis that preferences are quadratic ($\gamma = 0$) would not be rejected by the data against the alternative of asymmetric preferences ($\gamma \neq 0$). *Third*, after 1983, a nonlinear Taylor rule seems to provide a more accurate characterization of U.S. monetary policy than a linear rule. In particular, the Federal Funds rate appears to react more strongly to the volatility than to the level of inflation after 1983. *Fourth*, since the coefficient on the conditional variance of inflation is positive and statistically significant after 1983, this suggest that the Fed's inflation preferences during the Volcker-Greenspan might be asymmetric. In particu-

⁴The model assumes that the current values of inflation and the output gap are predetermined and contemporaneously observable. However, we use this Instrumental Variable procedure because, in practice, uncertainty regarding the natural output rate and data revisions mean that there is a discrepancy between the Federal Reserve's information set at the time it takes a policy decision and the time series used (or constructed) by the econometrician to estimate the model. This discrepancy is subsumed in the disturbance term and likely to be correlated with the explanatory variables. For an analysis of Taylor rules using "real-time" data, see Orphanides (2001).

lar, positive deviations of inflation from its target appear to be weighted more severely than negative ones, even if they are of the same magnitude.

3.4 Comparison with Clarida et al. (2000)

The results above parallel somewhat the evidence in Clarida *et al.* (2000), where it is reported that the coefficient on inflation in a forward-looking version of the Taylor rule is substantially different in the pre-Volcker and Volcker-Greenspan eras. In order to make this comparison more direct, consider results in Tables 5 and 6 that report the estimated rules using quarterly data for the periods 1960:I to 1979:II and 1983:I to 2000:IV. As before, the second sample excludes the period when the Federal Reserve targeted nonborrowed reserves, rather than short-term interest rates.

Column (1) in both tables illustrates the main results in Clarida *et al.* (2000), namely that the reaction with respect to inflation (c), is smaller than unity prior to 1979 but larger than unity during the tenure of chairmen Volcker and Greenspan. This result is robust to the measure of the output gap. However, note in Table 5 that this result does not hold completely once we allow for asymmetric inflation preferences on the part of the central bank. Although results are sensitive to the form of the rule, there are specifications for which the point estimate of c is larger than one prior to 1979, though one would not be able to reject the null hypothesis that the true value is less than one. For example, column (3) in Table 5 correspond to the baseline model reported by Clarida *et al.* (p. 157) but includes the conditional variance of inflation as one of the regressors. The point estimates of the inflation coefficient are 1.14(0.12) and 1.04(0.12) depending on the output gap measure employed. Also, notice that in certain cases, the coefficient on σ_π^2 is negative and statistically different from zero. As we will see in the following section, this reflects the mildly negative relation between the real interest rate and the conditional variance of inflation in the pre-Volcker data. A negative coefficient on the conditional variance would indicate that $\gamma < 0$, namely that negative deviation from the inflation rate target were more heavily weighted than positive ones. However, this coefficient is statistically different from zero in only a few cases and, given the large variability of inflation during this period, the real interest rate response is considerably muted.

Regarding the post-1982 data, Table 6 shows that the inflation response is considerably smaller when we allow asymmetric preferences. For some specifications, \hat{c} is smaller than one, though one would not be able to reject the null hypothesis that the true value is larger than one. The reason for this result is straightforward: since the conditional variance of inflation depends on lagged squared inflation, the inflation response consists of a linear part, with

coefficient c , and a nonlinear part, with coefficient d . The overall response with respect to inflation is stabilizing, as suggested by Clarida *et al.* The contribution of Table 6 is to show that the nonlinear reaction to the conditional variance of inflation is a quantitative and, in most cases, statistically important component of Fed's reaction function after 1982.

3.5 What Drives the Results?

In order to understand the empirical results reported in this paper, it is instructive to consider the relation between the real interest rate and the conditional variance of inflation in both subsamples. Although the policy rule is defined in terms of the nominal interest rate, one can think of the central bank as implicitly targeting a measure of the real interest rate, that in turn affects output through the IS curve. Figures 1 and 2 plot the relation between the two variables at the quarterly frequency, and the fitted values of an OLS regression of the real rate on $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$. The estimated parameters of these regressions are reported in columns (3) and (4) in Table 7. Results using monthly data are reported in columns (1) and (2). Notice that in the first subsample, the real rate is negatively but mildly related to the conditional variance. The coefficient is statistically different from zero, but given the large variability of inflation during this period, the real interest rate response is small. In contrast, in the second subsample, there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The result is striking in that inflation is much less volatile in the second than in the first subsample. The positive relation between the real interest rate and the conditional variance of inflation is consistent with asymmetric inflation preferences because this specification predicts a prudence motive in the implementation of monetary policy.

4 Conclusions

This paper contributes to the literature on optimal monetary policy rules by considering setups where certainty equivalence does not hold because either central bank preferences are not quadratic and/or the aggregate supply schedule is convex. Under some simplifying assumptions, it is possible to derive a nonlinear Taylor rule incorporating both features. This rule is general in that it nests the cases where either feature is present or where none is and, consequently, the monetary policy rule is linear.

In order to examine how relevant nonlinear monetary policy rules are in practice, we estimate the rule using U.S. data during the Burns-Miller (pre-1979) and Volcker-Greenspan (post-1982) regimes at the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Although, there is no evidence against a linear aggregate supply schedule in either regime, we find fairly robust evidence in favor of the view that the central bank preferences are considerably different in both regimes. In particular, the Fed's inflation preferences during the Volcker-Greenspan regime appear to be asymmetric, in the sense that positive inflation deviations from its target are weighted more heavily than negative ones, even if they are of the same magnitude. In contrast, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis of quadratic inflation preferences during the Burns-Miller regime. Under asymmetric preferences, the fact that certainty equivalence does not hold, means that a prudence motive can arise in the conduct of monetary policy and interest rates respond not only to inflation changes but also to its variability.

A final interesting result of this paper is that, in contrast to Clarida *et al.* (2000) who report that interest rate policy in the Volcker-Greenspan period appears to have been more sensitive to changes in expected inflation than in the pre-Volcker period, we do not find the response of interest rates to inflation to be larger than unity in the Volcker-Greenspan period. However, once the additional effect from the conditional variance of inflation is considered, the rule in the Volcker-Greenspan era is found to be stabilizing as well.

In future work, we intend to examine empirically this model using data from several European countries. This is important for two reasons. First, Dolado *et al.* (2003) report evidence consistent with a nonlinear Phillips curve for the main European countries. Hence, in contrast to the U.S., the full model with nonquadratic central bank preferences and a convex Phillips curve might be empirically relevant for these countries. Second, the simple and more tractable case where the central bank loss function depends only on inflation might be a better description of the institutional arrangements in some European countries, notably Germany.

5 Colophon

We thank Pedro Álvarez-Lois, the editor, an anonymous referee, and seminar participants at CEMFI and LACEA 2002 (Madrid) for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. The first author acknowledges the hospitality of the University of Montréal. The third author thanks the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada) and the Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche (Québec) for financial support. Address correspondence to: Francisco J. Ruge-Murcia, Département de sciences économiques, Université de Montréal, C.P. 6128, succursale Centre-ville, Montréal (Québec) H3C 3J7; Canada, e-mail: francisco.ruge-murcia@umontreal.ca

Table 1. Estimated Aggregate Supply Schedules

Coefficients	Monthly Data		Quarterly Data	
	IPI (1)	(-)Unemp. (2)	IPI (3)	(-)Unemp. (4)
<i>A. Linear</i>				
$\hat{\alpha}$	0.06* (0.006)	0.24* (0.03)	0.05† (0.029)	0.21† (0.13)
<i>B. Nonlinear with No ARCH</i>				
$\hat{\alpha}$	0.06* (0.007)	0.24* (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.06 (0.05)
$\hat{\phi}$	0.31 (0.47)	0.12 (0.59)	-0.79 (2.47)	47.92 (37.87)
<i>C. Linear with GARCH(1,1)</i>				
$\hat{\alpha}$	0.05* (0.006)	0.22* (0.03)	0.015 (0.03)	0.08 (0.15)
$\hat{\phi}$	0 —	0 —	0 —	0 —
$\hat{\psi}$	0.005* (0.0025)	0.004* (0.0019)	0.07† (0.04)	0.07† (0.04)
$\hat{\zeta}$	0.21* (0.05)	0.17* (0.05)	0.08† (0.05)	0.08† (0.05)
$\hat{\kappa}$	0.75* (0.06)	0.80* 0.05	0.87* (0.06)	0.87* (0.06)

Notes: The figures in parenthesis are standard errors. The superscripts * and † denote the rejection of the hypothesis that the true coefficient is zero at the 5 per cent and 10 per cent significance levels, respectively.

Table 2. LM Test for Neglected ARCH

Residuals	Monthly Data		Quarterly Data	
	IPI (1)	(-)Unemp. (2)	IPI (3)	(-)Unemp. (4)
Original	34.54*	25.96*	15.72*	24.29*
Standardized	4.50	3.34	9.83	9.93

Notes: The LM statistics were calculated as the product of the number of observations and the uncentered R^2 of the OLS regression of the squared unemployment residual on a constant and six of its lags. See notes to Table 1.

**Table 3. Estimated Reaction Functions
Monthly Data
Pre-Volcker**

Coefficient	Nonlinear				
	Linear (1)	Baseline (2)	Forward (q, k)		Backward (5)
			(3, 6) (3)	(6, 6) (4)	
<i>A. Using IPI Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	-0.10 (0.33)	0.38* (0.15)	0.39* (0.08)	0.32* (0.09)	0.36* (0.17)
\hat{b}	0.57† (0.31)	0.49* (0.13)	0.08 (0.06)	0.12† (0.11)	0.43* (0.10)
\hat{c}	0.84* (0.31)	0.38† (0.22)	0.73* (0.07)	0.80* (0.09)	0.40† (0.23)
\hat{d}	0 —	4.27 (6.81)	-5.19 (3.57)	-5.94 (4.31)	4.52 (7.41)
<i>J</i> statistic	4.98	6.76	6.20	7.15	7.14
d.f.	8	13	13	13	13
<i>B. Using (minus) Unemployment Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	0.34 (0.28)	0.71* (0.17)	0.78* (0.16)	0.80* (0.16)	0.27 (0.22)
\hat{b}	1.93* (0.50)	4.33* (1.30)	0.29* (0.14)	0.37* (0.17)	2.04* (0.33)
\hat{c}	0.75* (0.13)	0.10 (0.29)	0.70* (0.04)	0.70* (0.04)	0.72* (0.10)
\hat{d}	—	3.03 (4.92)	-3.35 (2.05)	-3.93† (2.05)	4.02 (5.09)
<i>J</i> statistic	7.02	6.43	6.63	6.17	7.93
d.f.	8	13	13	13	13

Notes: The instruments are a constant and six lags of the variables in the estimated rule. d.f. stands for degrees of freedom. See notes to Table 1.

**Table 4. Estimated Reaction Functions
Monthly Data
Volcker-Greenspan**

Coefficient	Nonlinear				
	Linear (1)	Baseline (2)	Forward (q, k)		Backward (5)
			(3, 6) (3)	(6, 6) (4)	
<i>A. Using IPI Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	0.50* (0.23)	0.38* (0.15)	0.28* (0.10)	0.08 (0.05)	0.26* (0.12)
\hat{b}	0.40 [†] (0.23)	0.88* (0.29)	1.98* (0.81)	0.65 (1.02)	0.90* (0.35)
\hat{c}	0.89* (0.19)	0.73* (0.26)	-0.02 (0.59)	0.46 (0.66)	0.55 (0.37)
\hat{d}	0 -	10.17* (3.00)	21.05* (7.34)	29.10 [†] (15.07)	17.87* (6.21)
<i>J</i> statistic	6.00	10.76	10.17	12.67	11.69
d.f.	8	13	13	13	13
<i>B. Using (minus) Unemployment Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	0.52* (0.23)	0.13 [†] (0.08)	0.15 [†] (0.08)	0.13 (0.08)	0.15 [†] (0.08)
\hat{b}	2.75* (1.38)	4.06* (1.97)	4.52* (2.16)	6.74* (3.24)	3.40* (1.45)
\hat{c}	0.74* (0.24)	0.43 (0.46)	0.72 (0.46)	0.59 (0.52)	0.57 (0.36)
\hat{d}	-	17.38* (7.10)	17.85* (7.10)	22.41* (9.74)	16.86* (6.07)
<i>J</i> statistic	7.05	9.87	10.20	9.43	9.90
d.f.	8	13	13	13	13

Notes: The instruments are a constant and six lags of the variables in the estimated rule. d.f. stands for degrees of freedom. See notes to Tables 1 and 3.

**Table 5. Estimated Reaction Functions
Quarterly Data
Pre-Volcker**

Coefficient	Nonlinear				
	Linear (1)	Baseline (2)	Forward (q, k)		Backward (5)
			(1, 1) (3)	(1, 2) (4)	
<i>A. Using IPI Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	0.58* (0.15)	0.43 (0.29)	0.99* (0.24)	1.00* (0.27)	0.72* (0.22)
\hat{b}	1.07 (0.66)	2.97 (6.56)	0.31* (0.11)	0.29† (0.16)	0.94* (0.30)
\hat{c}	0.49† (0.28)	-0.77 (4.49)	1.14* (0.12)	1.21* (0.20)	0.36 (0.27)
\hat{d}	-	1.41 (5.99)	-1.46* (0.43)	-1.87* (0.73)	0.59 (0.74)
J statistic	6.59	8.31	4.09	5.51	7.22
d.f.	4	7	7	7	7
<i>B. Using (minus) Unemployment Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	0.68* (0.16)	0.73* (0.21)	-0.99* (0.21)	1.08* (0.27)	0.87* (0.26)
\hat{b}	3.21* (0.91)	3.82* (1.48)	1.55* (0.43)	1.57* (0.77)	3.52* (0.65)
\hat{c}	0.71* (0.11)	0.63* (0.26)	1.04* (0.12)	1.14* (0.20)	0.46* (0.15)
\hat{d}	-	0.05 (0.57)	-1.04* (0.39)	-1.59* (0.66)	0.64 (0.48)
J statistic	7.03	6.96	4.60	4.56	6.26
d.f.	4	7	7	7	7

Notes: The instruments are a constant and four lags of the variables in the estimated rule. See notes to Tables 1 and 3.

**Table 6. Estimated Reaction Functions
Quarterly Data
Volcker-Greenspan**

Coefficient	Nonlinear				
	Linear (1)	Baseline (2)	Forward (q, k)		Backward (5)
			(1, 1) (3)	(1, 2) (4)	
<i>A. Using IPI Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	-0.12 (0.20)	-0.99 [†] (0.56)	-0.96* (0.44)	-0.78 [†] (0.40)	0.62 [†] (0.33)
\hat{b}	0.76 [†] (0.44)	0.51* (0.11)	0.72* (0.19)	1.03* (0.24)	0.51* (0.15)
\hat{c}	2.96* (0.75)	1.18* (0.23)	1.22* (0.27)	0.90* (0.39)	0.73* (0.23)
\hat{d}	—	5.44* (1.13)	5.43* (1.53)	6.25* (2.06)	1.00 (2.20)
J statistic	5.72	3.89	5.05	8.22	8.91
d.f.	4	7	7	7	7
<i>B. Using (minus) Unemployment Gap</i>					
\hat{a}	-0.19* (0.26)	-0.44 (0.39)	-0.87 (0.63)	-1.42* (0.55)	0.36 (0.33)
\hat{b}	2.36 [†] (1.37)	2.91* (0.76)	2.86* (0.80)	2.74* (0.66)	2.17* (0.58)
\hat{c}	3.08* (0.76)	1.14* (0.35)	0.89* (0.22)	1.03 [†] (0.52)	0.37 (0.28)
\hat{d}	—	4.81* (1.57)	5.39* (1.13)	6.88* (2.05)	3.18 (2.19)
J statistic	4.35	5.82	4.20	7.78	8.87
d.f.	4	7	7	7	7

Notes: The figures in parenthesis are standard errors. The instruments are a constant and four lags of the variables in the estimated rule. d.f. stands for degrees of freedom. The superscripts * and [†] denote the rejection of the hypothesis that the true coefficient is zero at the 5 per cent and 10 per cent significance levels, respectively.

Table 7. Results OLS Regression

Coefficient on	Monthly Data		Quarterly Data	
	Pre-Volcker (1)	Volcker-Greenspan (2)	Pre-Volcker (3)	Volcker-Greenspan (4)
Constant	0.63* (0.30)	2.62* (0.19)	2.32* (0.33)	-0.58 (1.13)
$\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$	-3.83 (2.34)	7.03* (1.92)	-0.94* (0.17)	4.15* (1.06)

Notes: See notes to Table 1.

A Derivation of Taylor Rule in Benchmark Case

This Appendix derives the optimal monetary policy rule when preferences are asymmetric and the supply curve is nonlinear but perfectly forecastable one period ahead (that is, $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$). The dynamic problem of the central bank (see eq. (1) in text) can be decomposed into the sequence of period-by-period problems:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Min} \quad & E_t \beta^2 L(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*), \\ & \{i_t\} \end{aligned}$$

subject to

$$\begin{aligned} y_{t+1} &= \delta y_t - r_t + x_{t+1}, \\ \pi_{t+1} &= \pi_t + F(y_t) + u_{t+1}, \end{aligned}$$

where $F(y_t) = \alpha y_t / (1 - \alpha \phi y_t)$, $x_{t+1} = \eta x_t$, and $i_t = r_t + E_t \pi_{t+1}$, with all notation as defined in the text. In order to derive the first-order condition, apply the chain rule and note that y_{t+1} is predetermined at time t :

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= E_t ((\partial L_{t+2} / \partial \pi_{t+2}) (\partial \pi_{t+2} / \partial y_{t+1}) (\partial y_{t+1} / \partial r_t) (\partial r_t / \partial i_t)), \\ &= -\alpha (\exp(\gamma E_t (\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2 / 2) \sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - 1) / (\gamma (1 - \alpha \phi y_{t+1})^2), \end{aligned}$$

where we have exploited the conditional-moment generating function of the linex function to write $E_t (\exp(\gamma (\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*)))$ as $\exp(\gamma E_t (\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2 / 2) \sigma_{\pi,t}^2)$. The first-order condition is satisfied if and only if:

$$E_t \pi_{t+2} = \pi^* - \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2. \tag{A1}$$

Note that this is an equilibrium condition that does not imply causality from the second to the first inflation moments. That is, (A1) does not say that a higher conditional variance of inflation will decrease expected inflation. Instead, it says that, in the presence of a precautionary motive, the central bank will attempt to set inflation two-years ahead at a lower level than the targeted rate. The reason is that, when $\gamma > 0$, positive deviations from π^* yield a larger loss than negative deviations. Next, from the aggregate supply relation

$$\begin{aligned} E_t \pi_{t+2} &= E_t (\pi_{t+1} + F(y_{t+1}) + u_{t+2}), \\ &= E_t (\pi_t + F(y_t) + F(y_{t+1}) + u_{t+2} + u_{t+1}), \\ &= \pi_t + \alpha y_t / (1 - \alpha \phi y_t) + \alpha (\delta y_t - r_t + \eta x_t) / (1 - \alpha \phi (\delta y_t - r_t + \eta x_t)). \end{aligned}$$

Hence, it must be the case that

$$\pi^* - \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2 = \pi_t + \alpha y_t / (1 - \alpha \phi y_t) + \alpha (\delta y_t - r_t + \eta x_t) / (1 - \alpha \phi (\delta y_t - r_t + \eta x_t)).$$

Solving for r_t :

$$r_t = \delta y_t + \frac{(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2 + F(y_t))}{\alpha(1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2 + F(y_t)))} + \eta x_t.$$

Substituting into the Fisher equation, using $E_t \pi_{t+1} = \pi_t + F(y_t)$, and simplifying yields:

$$i_t = \pi_t + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \frac{(1/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2 + F(y_t))}{1 - \phi(\pi_t - \pi^* + \gamma \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 / 2 + F(y_t))} + \eta x_t,$$

that corresponds to Equation (8) in the text.

B Derivation of Taylor Rule when the Output Gap is also an Argument of the Loss Function

This Appendix derives the optimal Taylor rule in the case where the central bank's loss function depends both on inflation and the output gap. For tractability, we consider the case the loss associated with the deviation of $F(y_{t+1})$ from zero is represented by a quadratic function, and retain the initial assumption that $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$. Following Svensson (2003, Appendix A), the minimization problem is solved in two stages. The first stage is to minimize the objective function in (16) conditional on π_t , $E_t \pi_{t+1}$ and x_t , and subject only to the constraints (3) and (4). Consider the Lagrangian of the first-stage problem:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_t = & E_t \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \beta^s \left[L(\pi_{t+s} - \pi^*) + (\lambda/2) (F(y_{t+s}))^2 \right] + \\ & + E_t \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \beta^{s+1} \Phi_{t+s+1,t} (\pi_{t+s+1} - \pi_{t+s} - F(y_{t+s}) - u_{t+s+1}), \end{aligned}$$

where $\Phi_{t+s+1,t}$ is the Lagrange multiplier of the constraint. The first-order conditions are

$$\pi_{t+s+1} : 0 = E_t \left[\left(\frac{\exp(\gamma(\pi_{t+s+1} - \pi^*)) - 1}{\gamma} \right) + \Phi_{t+s+1,t} - \beta \Phi_{t+s+2,t} \right] \quad (\text{B1})$$

$$y_{t+s} : 0 = \lambda E_t [F(y_{t+s}) F'(y_{t+s}) - \beta \Phi_{t+s+1,t} F'(y_{t+s})]. \quad (\text{B2})$$

Since the problem is recursive consider $s = 1$. Under the assumption that $\sigma_\epsilon^2 = 0$, y_{t+1} is predetermined. From (B2), it follows that the multiplier $\Phi_{t+2,t} = (\lambda/\beta)F(y_{t+1})$ and (B1) may be rewritten as

$$0 = \frac{\exp(\gamma E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - 1}{\gamma} + (\lambda/\beta)(F(y_{t+1}) - \beta F(y_{t+2})), \quad (\text{B3})$$

where, as before, we have used the moment-generating function of the linex function to write $E_t(\exp(\gamma(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*)))$ as $\exp(\gamma E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2)$. Taking conditional expectations in both sides of Equation (3) delivers

$$\begin{aligned} F(y_{t+1}) &= E_t \pi_{t+2} - E_t \pi_{t+1}, \\ &= E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) - E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{B4})$$

that replaced into (B3) yields a nonlinear second-order difference equation in $E_t(\pi_t - \pi^*)$ of the form

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= E_t(\pi_{t+3} - \pi^*) - \frac{\exp(\gamma E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (\gamma^2/2)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2) - 1}{\lambda\gamma} \\ &\quad - (1 + 1/\beta)E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (1/\beta)E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*). \end{aligned}$$

The exact solution to this difference equation is hard to obtain, but it is possible to obtain an approximate solution by first linearizing the nonlinear term around the point $(E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*), \sigma_{\pi,t}^2) = (0, 0)$. This approximate second-order difference equation is

$$E_t(\pi_{t+3} - \pi^*) - 2\tau E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) + (1/\beta)E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*) = (\gamma/2\lambda)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2, \quad (\text{B5})$$

where $2\tau = (1 + 1/\lambda + 1/\beta)$. Notice that if $\lambda = 0$, then this equation reduces to the first-order condition (A1). (To see this, simply multiply through (B5) by $-\lambda$ and take the limit as $\lambda \rightarrow 0$). The solution to this difference equation is standard and can be shown to satisfy:

$$E_t(\pi_{t+2} - \pi^*) = \theta E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*) - \omega \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s}^2, \quad (\text{B6})$$

where the coefficient θ satisfies $0 < \theta < 1$ and is the smallest root of the characteristic equation $\mu^2 - 2\tau\mu + (1/\beta) = 0$, and $\omega = (\gamma/2\lambda^2)(1 - \beta)(1 - \beta\theta)$. Substitution of (B6) into (B4),

$$F(y_{t+1}) = -(1 - \theta)E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*) - \omega\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 - \omega\beta\theta \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2, \quad (\text{21})$$

where we have used the recursion

$$\sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s}^2 = \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 + \beta\theta \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2.$$

Linearizing $F(y_{t+1})$ around 0 by means of a first-order Taylor series expansion yields

$$E_t(y_{t+1}) = (1/\alpha) \left(-(1-\theta)E_t(\pi_{t+1} - \pi^*) - \omega\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 - \omega\beta\theta \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2 \right). \quad (\text{B7})$$

In the second-stage, substitute (B7) and into

$$i_t = E_t\pi_{t+1} - E_t y_{t+1} + \delta y_t + \eta x_t. \quad (\text{B8})$$

and use (3) to obtain the Taylor rule:

$$\begin{aligned} i_t &= \pi_t + ((1-\theta)/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t)) + (\omega/\alpha)\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 \\ &\quad + (\omega\beta\theta/\alpha) \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2 + F(y_t) + \delta y_t + \eta x_t. \end{aligned}$$

In the special case where $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ follows an AR(1) process (that is, an ARCH(1)) with $\varsigma \in (0, 1)$ the coefficient of the lagged squared residual, then

$$\sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2 = \left(\frac{\varsigma}{1 - \beta\theta\varsigma} \right) \sigma_{\pi,t}^2.$$

and the (approximately) optimal Taylor rule is:

$$\begin{aligned} i_t &= \pi_t + ((1-\theta)/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t)) + F(y_t) + \delta y_t \\ &\quad + (\omega/\alpha)(1 + \beta\theta\varsigma/(1 - \beta\theta\varsigma))\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 + \eta x_t. \end{aligned}$$

In the more general case where $\sigma_{\pi,t}^2$ follows a GARCH(1,1) process with parameters ς and κ , where κ is the coefficient of the lagged conditional variance, then

$$\sum_{s=0}^{\infty} (\beta\theta)^s \sigma_{\pi,t+s+1}^2 = \left(\frac{\varsigma}{1 - \beta\theta\varsigma} \right) \sigma_{\pi,t}^2 - \left(\frac{\kappa}{1 - \beta\theta\varsigma} \right) \zeta_t,$$

where ζ_t is an independently and identically distributed innovation and the same approximate Taylor rule is obtained (up to a random term):

$$\begin{aligned} i_t &= \pi_t + ((1-\theta)/\alpha)(\pi_t - \pi^* + F(y_t)) + F(y_t) + \delta y_t \\ &\quad + (\omega/\alpha)(1 + \beta\theta\varsigma/(1 - \beta\theta\varsigma))\sigma_{\pi,t}^2 + \eta x_t - (\kappa/(1 - \beta\theta\varsigma))\zeta_t. \end{aligned}$$

This is Equation (18) in the text.

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Fig. 1. Relation between the Real Interest Rate and the Conditional Variance of Inflation 1960:I to 1979:II

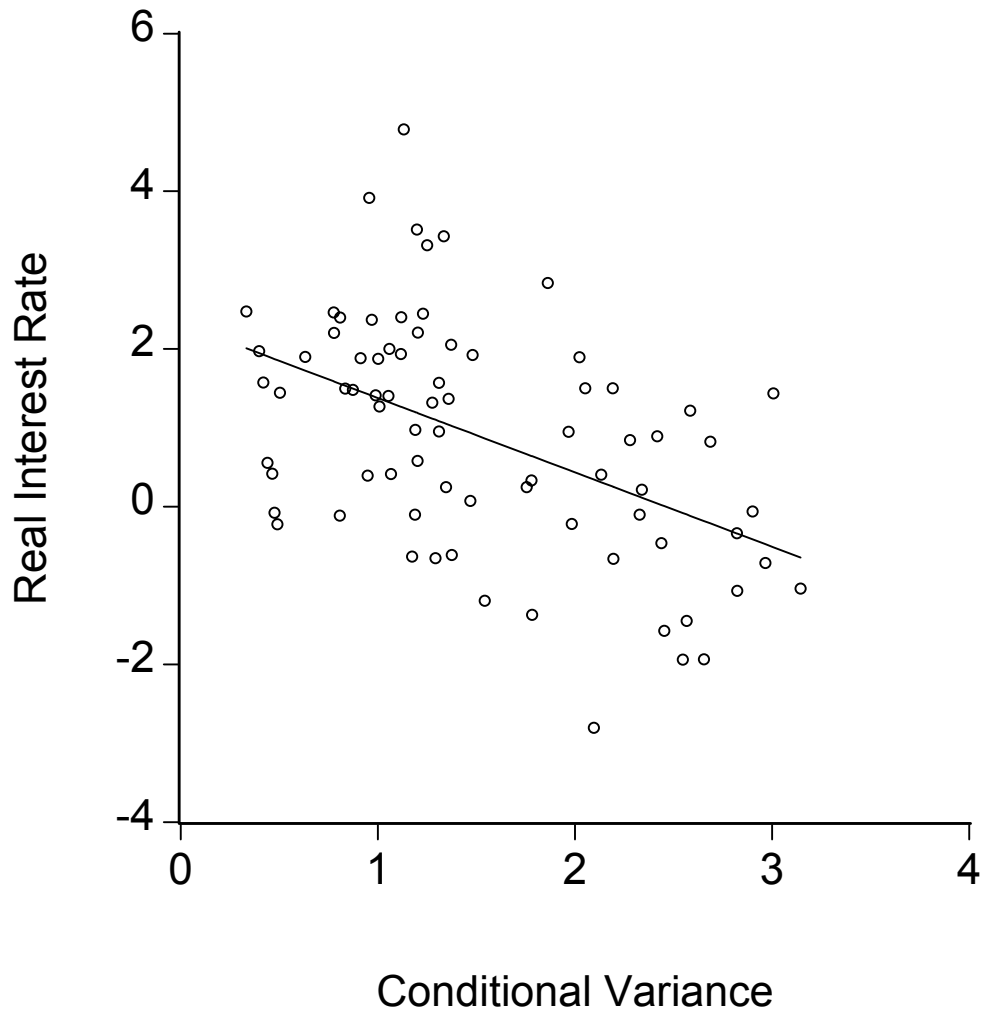
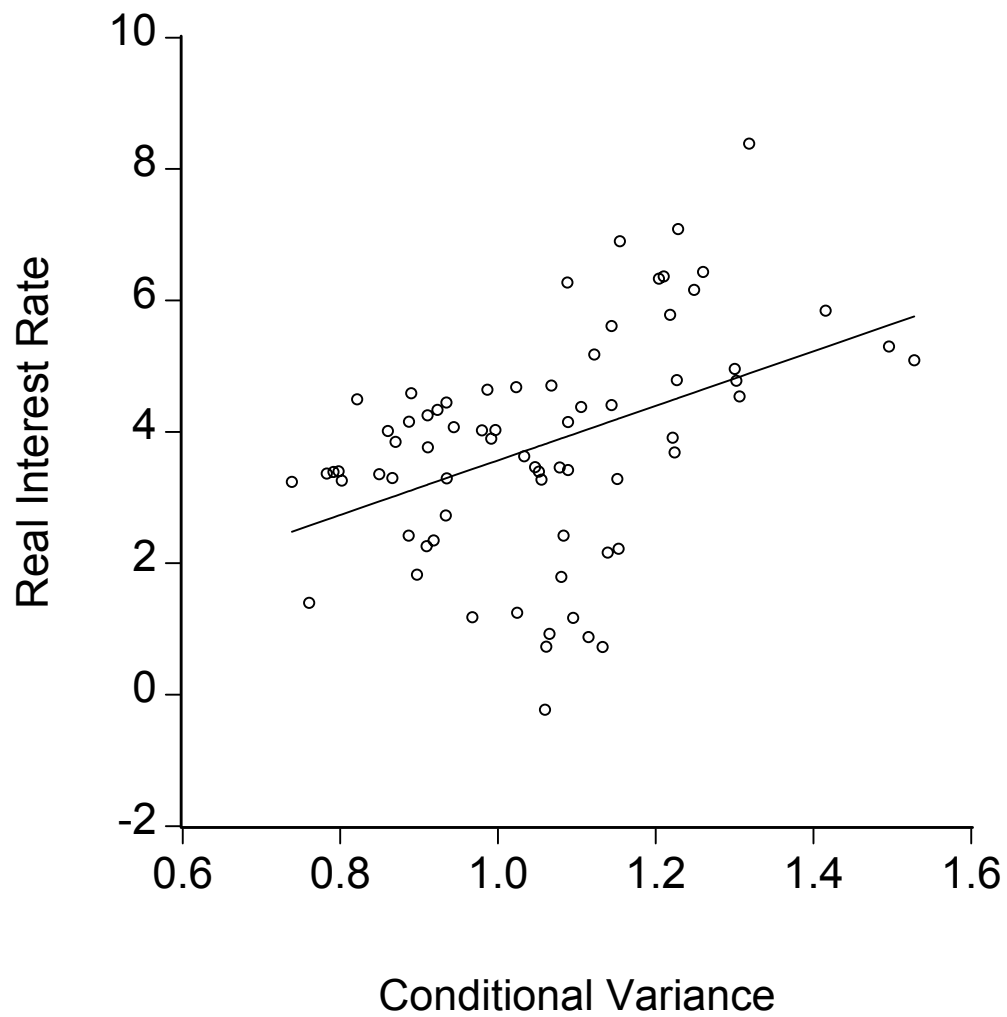


Fig. 2. Relation between the Real Interest Rate and the Conditional Variance of Inflation 1983:I to 2000:IV



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